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INTRODUCTION

About 20 years ago at a railway station the present research scholar was introduced to a handsome child. When the child was asked his name, he simply looked at without giving any answer. One of his fellow passengers, perhaps his father, reported that as the child was deaf, he was unable to hear and consequently incapable of understanding any word. Sound was an unknown factor in his daily round and he still did not know his own name or even one word of his mother-tongue. So it would hardly be correct to say that he and the research scholar were introduced to each other. The barrier of communication caused by deafness and the consequence of his ignorance of using language prevented that.

Human-beings are biologically programmed to develop certain skills in response to certain inputs. Language learning is one of such skills which must be gained very early in life. There is no doubt that one of the most crucial factors in child-development is the acquisition of spoken language. It enables him to communicate with his environment by expressing to others his thoughts, needs and feelings. It enables him to receive and comprehend the thoughts, needs and feelings of others too. Acquisition of this two-way-communication-process is highly dependent upon a well functioning auditory system. Thus, it is the EAR that provides the major sensory input without which a child is unable to learn to speak. In other words, hearing is
the most expedient basis for normal language acquisition. As
language is acquired naturally by most of the people, they have
great difficulty in imagining what their condition would be in
the world without words. Limitations on the understanding and
use of speech are the greatest handicap of deafness. The
intellectual, emotional and social development of the deaf are
greatly hindered due to his loss of hearing. The accepted medium
of social intercourse in this world is spoken language mainly.
A deaf-person's verbal retardation, due to his loss of hearing,
prevents him always from such social intercourse. In the days
predating the electronic era, people's interest in the disorders
of hearing led to the development of a number of tests of hearing
sensitivity. "SPEECH-AUDIO-METRY" is one and perhaps the most
important of such tests by which one's hearing acuity for speech
is measured. Speech - Audiometry is an indispensable clinical
tool of audiological evaluation. Its assistance in measuring
hearing acuity, determining the anatomic location of the hearing
disorder and in evaluation of ability to communicate is well-
known. Non-availability of properly prepared speech materials
in particular Indian languages in a known factor. The Bengali
language is not an exception to it. To alleviate this problem
different types of speech materials in the Bengali language have
been prepared by the present research scholar to test the hearing-
acuity of Bengali speaking subjects.